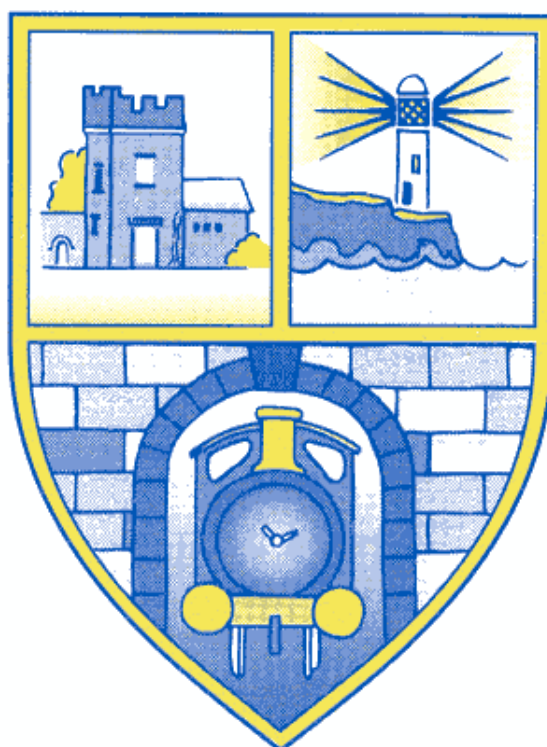


# Whitehead Primary School & Nursery Unit

Valued, Inspired, Prepared



## Pastoral Care Policy

Last Review	August 2025	G.Baird
Next Review	August 2028	G.Baird

# Ethos, Vision & Mission

## Ethos

A nurturing, inclusive environment, where everyone is valued, inspired and prepared; in order to thrive and contribute to the world.

## Vision

Empowering everyone to SHINE

## Mission Statements

### Share

We will foster a culture of collaboration where everyone is encouraged to share ideas, time, resources and successes to build a strong, connected community.

### Help

To show kindness and empathy while supporting one another, offering help when it's needed and knowing that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.

### Include

To welcome and respect everyone and, through our daily interactions, promote a sense of belonging, ensuring that every voice is heard and everyone is valued.

### Nurture

To provide a happy, safe and supportive environment, where every child is nurtured emotionally, socially and academically so that they can grow into confident, resilient learners.

### Excel

Through engaging high quality, meaningful learning opportunities and by setting high expectations, challenging each pupil at their level and providing constructive feedback, we will inspire every child to reach their full potential.

## **Rationale**

In an ever-changing society with a wide variety of attitudes towards issues such as drugs, sex, alcohol, bullying and diet we believe that the Pastoral Care dimension within Whitehead Primary School is more important than ever.

## **Definition**

“The pastoral care dimension of the school involves both teacher and pupils. For pupils, this will involve encouraging them to set and achieve personal, social and academic goals through a planned development approach. For teachers, it will involve providing them with opportunities for professional development.”

[N.I.C.C. Guidance Material]

The pastoral dimension should contribute to the creation of a supportive atmosphere in the school for both teachers and pupils.

## **Our Ethos**

A nurturing, inclusive environment, where everyone is valued, inspired and prepared; in order to thrive and contribute to the world.

Based on every “Every School a Good School” (DE 2009), this document sets out our school’s policy and practice in relation to Pastoral Care. The key areas are: child centred provision, high quality of learning and teaching, effective leadership and connecting to the local community.

## **CHILD CENTRED PROVISION**

“The aim of pastoral care within Whitehead Primary School is to ensure all-round development: children who are contented, socially at ease and educationally thriving.” It is our desire that children:

- feel safe and secure;
- are valued as individuals and grow in self-esteem;
- are given a meaningful voice through class, school and eco councils;
- achieve their full potential;
- develop the essential skills, attitudes and values necessary for life.

**1. We promote equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual pupils and a respect for diversity.**

- Our admissions criteria are designed to ensure equality for all.
- Previously we have had a child who was wheelchair bound. In meeting his and the needs of others we have disabled access, lifts and disabled toilets, one of which contains a shower unit.
- Newcomers are very welcome, and we have designed a pack to welcome them and their parents to our school.
- Annually we celebrate “European day of languages” encouraging the children to dress up in the costume of a different country and to learn more about that country.

**2. We seek to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning by:**

- **Promoting good attendance**

Holiday lists are made available to parents in very good time for the new academic year. Parents are regularly discouraged from taking holidays during term time. Certificates are awarded and class photos displayed for the top attending classes on a half termly basis. At the end of the school year individual medals to those children with attendance of more than 99.4%.

- **Promoting positive discipline.**

Throughout the school we use golden time to reward children who adhere to the mission of our school. We use the acronym:

S share

H help

I include

N nurture

E excel

On a weekly basis in assembly children are rewarded a “Shining Star” for showing our mission in their behaviour. At a class, group and individual level within each classroom, teachers use a variety of reward charts, stickers, tokens etc.

- **Welcoming newcomers**

At present we have a number of children within the school who are from other nationalities. We have designed a welcome pack for both them and their parents.

- Our Special Educational Needs Provision

We have teachers available to support children with literacy and numeracy boost groups. Providing extra support in areas children may be finding particularly difficult.

### **3. We believe in and support pupil participation and involvement in decisions about school life. We do this through:**

- **School and Class councils**

In September each year the children in Y4 – Y7 elect representatives from their class to be on School Council – ‘Pupil Voice’. These pupils meet with the principal and each year decide on the school charity for the year, organise the charity event and discuss and add their ideas to the School Development Plan. Class councils meet prior to Pupil Voice meetings so that representatives can bring ideas from their class. Nursery - Y3 children use circle time as a means of discussing ideas.

- **Eco School Committee**

Children are also elected onto an Eco Committee. They decide how we as a school could show greater care for the environment. In recent years we have been awarded our green flag.

- **Circle Time**

Circle Time takes place on a regular basis throughout the school. In addition, the principal conducts Circle Time on a half termly basis with each class. Circle time is used to address many pastoral care issues, to listen to the views of pupils and glean their ideas.

- **Yellow Caps**

Senior pupils act as Yellow Caps who engage with and assist younger pupils. They carry out duties at break and lunch times. Following training they also act as peer mediators in order to resolve any minor playground disputes.

- **Self Evaluation**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> term each year pupils, parents and staff complete a questionnaire regarding an important aspect of school life. Pupil questionnaires are conducted in the classroom. In addition, several teachers use suggestion boxes and feelings boards within their classrooms.

### **4. We follow Child Protection guidelines fully**

- Children follow several programmes as they progress through the school including internet safety, anti-bullying and drug awareness.

- On an annual basis all staff; teachers, classroom assistants, nursery assistants, parent volunteers, playground supervisors, canteen, cleaners, caretaker & secretary receive training in child protection and code of conduct.
- On an annual basis Board of Governors and all volunteers, PTA and parent helpers receive child protection training. Child Protection is on the agenda of every BoG meeting.
- All employee and voluntary staff are police checked by AccessNI.

#### **5. We support children in making healthy choices and through the provision of a healthy environment.**

- Several teachers are first aid trained with Miss Love acting as the Health and Safety Officer.
- We have a healthy break policy in school following guidelines as set in our Healthy Eating Policy.
- Our Physical development policy is built on a scheme by Val Sabin. We have purpose build gym hall and an assembly hall that can be used for some aspects of Physical Development. In addition, we have 3 good playgrounds and an extensive grass area that the children can use at certain times of the year. We also have adventure playgrounds.
- We have an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities which includes, football, hockey, netball, badminton, Irish dancing and jujitsu.
- On an annual basis our Y6 pupils attend an outdoor education centre and participate in canoeing, high ropes and team building.

### **HIGH QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING**

#### **1. We provide a broad and relevant curriculum**

- Annually we review designated areas of the curriculum to ensure continuity and progression from Nursery through to Y7.
- Religious Education, Physical Development, Drugs Education & Relationships and Sexuality Education are important aspects of the curriculum that we offer.
- Two teachers have been trained in Heartstart and carry out a programme of training with the children.
- As part of the Y6 PDMU programme children are trained in Peer Mediation and subsequently act as Peer Mediators in the playground.

#### **2. We promote positive relationships in all areas of school life**

- All members of staff both teaching and non-teaching can contribute to pastoral care in the manner in which they conduct themselves and interact with the children. As staff within the school, we will:

- ✓ Use positive praise to build-up self-esteem. We will avoid the use of sarcasm, and we will not belittle or humiliate the children in any way.
  - ✓ Have a positive attitude towards the children showing them concern, respect and valuing their opinions.
  - ✓ Seek to create a supportive environment within the classroom.
  - ✓ Work to improve peer relationships within the classroom.
  - ✓ Reward children using stickers, stars, stamps etc for work and/or behaviour.
  - ✓ Reward children using golden time, star pupil certificates and prizes for good manners.
- Within the classroom teachers draw up class charters with their pupils and rewards and sanctions are used extensively.
  - We value every member of staff and ensure good relationships through good communication and involvement at a decision-making level.
- 3. Teachers use a range of teaching strategies that respond to the diversity within the classroom such as:**
- Circle Time both in the classroom and with the Principal
  - Collaborative learning when children are working in different groups/with a partner to complete a task or an investigation.
  - Developing personal capabilities, when children can self-manage and work effectively with others.
- 4. Teachers reflect on their own work and the outcomes of individual pupils through:**
- Medium term planning when teachers reflect upon their teaching on a half termly basis.
  - Monitoring & evaluating by Curriculum Leaders who collect pupil books, review planning notes and observe classroom practice when appropriate.
  - Observation and record keeping in the foundation stage.
  - Consideration of pupil performance in PTE, PTM & NRIT tests alongside class tests.
  - PRSD, our annual professional development programme.

## **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

### **1. Governors understand their responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils.**

- Governors monitor and evaluate the strategies in place for promoting pastoral care, health, well-being and attendance.
- All governors receive child protection training and understand their role in child protection.
- Governors are kept abreast of, and monitor the Principal's reports regarding behaviour, suspension and exclusion.
- On an annual basis governors meet with all members of the staff team in an informal setting.

### **2. In relation to pastoral care we support the professional development of all staff.**

- The Curriculum Leader will also endeavour to keep staff informed of what training is available from outside the school.
- Training days such as Baker Days and School Development Days can be used to address a variety of pastoral issues.
- Weekly staff meetings can also be used to address pastoral issues.
- We are very keen to learn and make every effort to observe the best practice in other schools.

### **3. We provide the resources necessary for pastoral care.**

- The PDMU Curriculum Leader conducts an annual audit of the resources within the school.
- A focus on anti-bullying lessons is apparent in planning notes. Anti-Bullying week is celebrated each year when the children complete a range of activities.

### **4. We monitor and evaluate our pastoral care practises in a number of ways.**

- Regular review of our School Development Plan.
- Class teachers will monitor the progress academically and pastorally of children in their classes. Where a teacher has a concern about the pastoral well-being of any child in his/her class, records will be kept of incidents and the necessary action taken. Where the teacher considers it appropriate the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (G Baird) will be informed.
- Regular monitoring and evaluating by curriculum leaders in PDMU, Physical Development and the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (G Baird)
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will ensure the delivery of Pastoral Care on a day-to-day basis.
- As the teacher responsible for Pastoral Care, Safeguarding & Child Protection, Mr Baird will be available to listen to and discuss any concerns regarding children or staff within the school. He will also draw any concerns that he might have to the attention of members of staff.
- SIMS is used to monitor attendance and the Principal meets with the EWO on a termly basis.
- Pupil, staff and parent questionnaires are used on an annual basis.

## **A SCHOOL CONNECTED TO ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY**

### **1. Good relationships and communication between the school and its parents and the wider community are crucial to our pupils' wellbeing and achievement.**

- We have an open-door policy where parents are always welcome in school whether to admire their children's work or raise an issue with the principal.
- We have a bright, attractive reception area where children's achievements are displayed.
- Each year we have a large number of parents who undergo child protection training and are police checked so that they can volunteer to coach sport, act as a parent helper in the classroom, attend trips etc.
- We have regular parents' meetings regarding the curriculum keeping parents abreast of changes in education.

- Parental interviews take place twice a year for all children. In addition, Y1 teachers meet with parents in September.
- Our PTA works tirelessly organising events for the children e.g. disco, games night, secret Santa. While raising much needed finance they are also raising awareness of the school community.
- Our school website contains lots of information including all of our policy statements.
- Communication with parents is regular and mainly takes the form of a monthly newsletter and via seesaw.
- If we are concerned about a child in anyway, we will contact parents to inform them.
- In terms of transition, we work closely with playgroups or nursery groups whose children are starting in Y1. In addition, we work very closely with local secondary level schools.

**2. We have good relationships and communication between the school and the education agencies that support us, namely:**

- EA
- Autism
- Behaviour support and primary Referral Unit
- Psychology
- EWO
- CASS

**3. We have good links with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies that support children's health, wellbeing and education.**

- School Nurse
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Physiotherapy

Last reviewed: August 2025

Next review: August 2028